

In the United States Court of Federal Claims

OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

No. 20-0962V

(not to be published)

SHARON SIRKIS,

Petitioner,

v.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

Chief Special Master Corcoran

Filed: June 2, 2023

Special Processing Unit (SPU);
Attorney's Fees and Costs

Maximillian J. Muller, Muller Brazil, LLP, Dresher, PA, for Petitioner.

Ronalda Elnetta Kosh, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for Respondent.

DECISION ON ATTORNEY'S FEES AND COSTS¹

On August 3, 2020, Sharon Sirkis filed a petition for compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. §300aa-10, *et seq.*² (the "Vaccine Act"). Petitioner alleges that she suffered shoulder injury related to vaccine administration as a result of a Tetanus-Diphtheria-acellular Pertussis vaccine administered to her right shoulder on November 24, 2018. Petition at 1. On February 17, 2023, I issued a decision awarding compensation to Petitioner based on Respondent's proffer. ECF No. 41.

Petitioner has now filed a motion for attorney's fees and costs, requesting a total award of \$20,019.77 (representing \$18,791.00 in fees and \$1,228.77 in costs).

¹ In accordance with Vaccine Rule 18(b), Petitioner has 14 days to identify and move to redact medical or other information, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy. If, upon review, I agree that the identified material fits within this definition, I will redact such material from public access.

² National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-660, 100 Stat. 3755. Hereinafter, for ease of citation, all section references to the Vaccine Act will be to the pertinent subparagraph of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa (2018).

Petitioner's Request for Attorney's Fees ("Motion") filed Apr. 17, 2023, ECF No. 46. In accordance with General Order No. 9, counsel for Petitioner represents that Petitioner incurred no out-of-pocket expenses. *Id.* at 2.

On May 1, 2023, Respondent reacted to the motion, indicating that he is satisfied that the statutory requirements for an award of attorney's fees and costs are met in this case, but deferring resolution of the amount to be awarded to my discretion. ECF No. 47. Petitioner did not file a reply thereafter.

The rates requested for work performed through the end of 2022 are reasonable, and consistent with our prior determinations, and will therefore be adopted. Petitioner has also requested 2023 rates as follows: \$425 per hour for work performed by attorney Maximillian Muller – representing a rate increase of \$25; \$177 per hour for work performed by paralegal Tereza Pavlacsek; and \$140 per hour for work performed by paralegal Erik Pavlacsek. Motion at 1-2, 10-11. I find these hourly rates to be reasonable and will award the attorney's fees requested. (And all time billed to the matter was also reasonably incurred.)

Furthermore, Petitioner has provided supporting documentation for all claimed costs. Attachment to Motion at 13-26. And Respondent offered no specific objection to the rates or amounts sought.

The Vaccine Act permits an award of reasonable attorney's fees and costs for successful claimants. Section 15(e). Accordingly, I hereby GRANT Petitioner's Motion for attorney's fees and costs. I award a total of **\$20,019.77 (representing \$18,791.00 in fees and \$1,228.77 in costs) as a lump sum in the form of a check jointly payable to Petitioner and Petitioner's counsel, Maximillian Muller.**

In the absence of a timely-filed motion for review (see Appendix B to the Rules of the Court), the Clerk of Court shall enter judgment in accordance with this Decision.³

IT IS SO ORDERED.

s/Brian H. Corcoran
Brian H. Corcoran
Chief Special Master

³ Pursuant to Vaccine Rule 11(a), the parties may expedite entry of judgment by filing a joint notice renouncing their right to seek review.